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Cabin Crew Training and Operational Realities: Confidence Training Alignment Framework

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of current cabin crew training in addressing practical operational and psychological demands; to examine the divergence between management and cabin crew perspectives regarding training, preparedness, and support systems, and to analyse the role of confidence, motivation, and organizational support in mediating and enhancing training effectiveness and performance outcomes.

Design/methodology/approach: This study employs a mixed-methods approach combining survey and interview data. A structured questionnaire was administered to 55 cabin crew members in the Omani/GCC aviation sector to measure confidence across key competencies. Semi-structured interviews with managers and senior crew provided qualitative insights. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and weighted averages, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed. Triangulation ensured the integration and validation of findings.

Findings: The findings reveal a misalignment between training practices and operational realities. Despite regular training, confidence levels remain inconsistent, particularly in cross-cultural and passenger management situations. Soft skills confidence is often experience-driven rather than training-based. Leadership support and organizational factors significantly influence performance and well-being. The results support the CTAM premise that training effectiveness depends on relevance and alignment, not merely frequency.

Research Implications: This study contributes to training evaluation literature by positioning confidence as a mediating variable between training and performance. It highlights the need to incorporate psychological and organizational factors into existing models. The proposed CTAF and CTAM frameworks provide a structured approach for analyzing training alignment in service-intensive sectors, offering a basis for future empirical research in aviation and human resource development.

Social Implications: The study highlights the importance of aligning training with real-world demands to improve employee well-being and service quality. Enhanced training relevance can reduce stress, fatigue, and burnout among cabin crew, contributing to a better work-life balance. Improved confidence and preparedness also support passenger safety and satisfaction, emphasizing the need for organizational policies that promote fairness, mental health, and supportive work environments.

Originality / Value: This study introduces the Confidence Training Alignment Framework (CTAF) and the CTAM model, offering a novel perspective on training effectiveness. It uniquely positions confidence as a central mediator and incorporates leadership and organizational support as moderators. The CTAM Matrix further provides an empirical tool to identify training gaps and paradoxes, contributing both conceptually and practically to aviation and human resource development research.

Keywords: Cabin Crew Training; Confidence Alignment; Aviation Management; Training Effectiveness; Organizational Support.

JEL: M12; M53; L93; J24; D23.

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Introduction

The aviation industry positions cabin crew at the forefront of passenger safety, service delivery, and intercultural interaction. Their responsibilities extend far beyond routine hospitality functions to include emergency response, medical assistance, and conflict management, thereby making them critical to both operational effectiveness and customer experience. The profession is inherently demanding, requiring adaptability to irregular work schedules, proficiency in cross-cultural communication, and the ability to perform under high-pressure conditions. Existing literature has largely concentrated on technical training and regulatory compliance, often neglecting the psychological and motivational determinants of cabin crew performance. In response, this study introduces the Confidence Training Alignment Framework, supported by the Confidence Training Alignment Model (CTAM) as its empirical extension. The framework conceptualizes confidence as a mediating construct linking training adequacy to operational outcomes, while accounting for moderating influences such as leadership support, motivation, and crew wellbeing. By incorporating both quantitative and qualitative evidence, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of how training effectiveness translates into real-world performance and employee satisfaction.

Despite substantial investments in structured and standardized training systems, a notable disconnect persists between simulated training environments and the complexities of actual in-flight operations. Cabin crew members are frequently required to manage unpredictable and high-stakes situations that demand rapid judgment, emotional resilience, and situational awareness—competencies that are not always sufficiently cultivated through conventional training approaches. This disparity raises important concerns regarding the extent to which existing training designs adequately prepare personnel for operational realities. Moreover, the evolving nature of global air travel, characterized by diverse passenger profiles, heightened service expectations, and stringent safety regulations, further intensifies the need for more holistic and adaptive training frameworks. Within this context, confidence emerges as a critical psychological resource that influences not only task performance but also interpersonal effectiveness and crisis management capabilities.

Building on these considerations, the present study contributes to the growing body of aviation management literature by integrating behavioral and organizational dimensions into the evaluation of training effectiveness. It advances the proposition that the true value of training lies not merely in knowledge acquisition or procedural compliance, but in its capacity to enhance confidence and facilitate effective real-time decision-making. The proposed Confidence Training Alignment Model (CTAM) provides a structured mechanism to examine how training inputs are translated into operational readiness through both mediating and moderating pathways. Through empirical validation, the study offers practical insights for airline management, training designers, and policymakers seeking to align training systems more closely with operational demands. Ultimately, the research aims to support the development of a more confident, resilient, and performance-oriented cabin crew workforce capable of navigating the complexities of the contemporary aviation environment.

Problem Statement

Despite the regular implementation of training programs in safety procedures and emergency response, cabin crew members often report insufficient confidence when dealing with real-world operational challenges, including medical emergencies, disruptive passengers, and cross-cultural interactions. While technical training is delivered systematically, the development of soft skills—such as communication, emotional resilience, and teamwork—remains inconsistent, outdated, or insufficiently contextualized to dynamic in-flight environments.

A further concern lies in the perceptual gap between management and cabin crew. Organizational leadership tends to emphasize training adequacy in terms of cultural awareness and communication competencies, whereas crew members frequently highlight issues related to fatigue, fairness, and the need for more practical, scenario-based training. This divergence reflects a broader misalignment between training design and operational realities.

Consequently, a paradox emerges: training is frequent and structured, yet it does not consistently translate into confidence or operational readiness. Existing training evaluation models predominantly focus on knowledge acquisition and compliance outcomes, with limited attention to psychological factors such as confidence or to the moderating influence of leadership and organizational support. This gap underscores the need for a more integrated framework. Accordingly, the present study seeks to address this misalignment by proposing the Confidence Training Alignment Framework and its operational model (CTAM), which examines how training inputs influence confidence and performance outcomes within a supportive organizational context.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does existing cabin crew training adequately prepare personnel for real-world operational and psychological challenges?
2. How do differences in perceptions between management and cabin crew affect the alignment between training design and operational requirements?
3. How do confidence, motivation, and organizational support influence the effectiveness of training in enhancing cabin crew performance?

Research Objectives

1. To evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of current cabin crew training in addressing practical operational and psychological demands.
2. To examine the divergence between management and cabin crew perspectives regarding training, preparedness, and support systems.
3. To analyse the role of confidence, motivation, and organizational support in mediating and enhancing training effectiveness and performance outcomes.

Review of Literature

Cabin Crew Profession

The cabin crew profession, commonly referred to as flight attendants, plays a critical role in ensuring passenger safety, service quality, and in-flight coordination. While pilots are responsible for flight operations, cabin crew execute safety procedures, manage passenger interactions, and maintain onboard service standards (Kim & Park, 2025, 2020; Ulufer & Soran, 2019). Their responsibilities extend beyond routine service delivery to include emergency response, first aid, and conflict resolution, making them integral to both operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. In addition, the profession requires strong interpersonal competence, teamwork, and adaptability, which are considered essential assets for effective cabin crew performance (Abeyratne, 2010).

Entry into this profession typically requires specific eligibility criteria set by airlines, including physical standards, communication ability, and interpersonal competence. Although no specialized degree is mandatory, educational backgrounds in hospitality, tourism, and languages are advantageous (Ulufer & Soran, 2019). The profession demands a combination of technical knowledge and soft skills such as communication, emotional intelligence, teamwork, and adaptability. Attributes such as calmness under pressure, cultural sensitivity, and physical and mental resilience are essential for effective performance (Bergman & Gillberg, 2015; Chidester & Anca, 2019; Ji et al., 2019). These competencies enable cabin crew to manage diverse passenger needs while maintaining safety and service excellence.

Challenges Faced by Cabin Crew

Cabin crew operate in a highly demanding work environment characterized by irregular schedules, long working hours, and frequent travel across time zones. These conditions often lead to fatigue, disrupted sleep patterns, and work–life imbalance, which can negatively affect both health and job performance (Kanki et al., 2019; Helmreich & Merritt, 2017). Additionally, extended periods away from home contribute to emotional strain and reduced social well-being (Kumari & Aithal, 2022).

A significant challenge arises from managing diverse passenger behaviors, including dealing with disruptive or aggressive individuals. Cabin crew must demonstrate emotional control, conflict resolution skills, and situational awareness to maintain safety and order onboard (Hu et al., 2017; Sert et al., 2026). Furthermore, language barriers and cultural differences complicate communication, often leading to misunderstandings and service inefficiencies. Effective cross-cultural competence is therefore essential in delivering satisfactory passenger experiences (Seriwatana & Charoensukmongkol, 2021; Ji, 2024).

In addition to interpersonal challenges, cabin crew must be prepared for emergencies such as medical incidents, evacuations, and safety threats. These situations require quick decision-making, composure, and adherence to strict protocols (Ehrlich, 1984). The profession also imposes physical and physiological challenges, including exposure to low humidity, radiation, and fluctuating cabin pressure, which may affect long-term health (Helmreich & Merritt, 2017). Collectively, these factors highlight the complexity and intensity of cabin crew responsibilities.

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Training Requirements and Skill Development

Training is a fundamental component of cabin crew preparedness, encompassing safety procedures, emergency response, customer service, and regulatory compliance. Airlines invest significantly in training programs to ensure that crew members can effectively handle in-flight situations and maintain service standards (Chang & Liao, 2009; Niwei, 2022). These programs include simulations of emergency scenarios, first aid certification, and communication training.

However, the demanding nature of training, combined with ongoing refresher courses, places additional pressure on cabin crew who must balance learning requirements with operational duties (Chang et al., 2013). Beyond technical competencies, training also emphasizes grooming, professional appearance, and behavioral standards, as cabin crew serve as representatives of the airline brand (Smith et al., 2023).

Despite these efforts, concerns remain regarding the adequacy and relevance of training in addressing real-world challenges. Conventional training approaches often focus on procedural knowledge rather than on developing psychological readiness, adaptability, and confidence required for dynamic operational environments.

Passenger Diversity and Behavioural Challenges

The increasing diversity of airline passengers presents both opportunities and challenges for cabin crew. Differences in language, culture, and expectations require high levels of cultural intelligence and communication skills. Misinterpretation of instructions due to language barriers can compromise both service quality and safety (Nopas et al., 2022).

Unruly passenger behavior further complicates in-flight operations, requiring cabin crew to manage conflicts without escalating tensions. This necessitates strong emotional intelligence, problem-solving abilities, and adherence to safety protocols (Sert et al., 2026). Effective handling of such situations is critical not only for maintaining order but also for ensuring a positive travel experience for all passengers.

Managing disruptive passenger behaviour requires not only adherence to safety protocols but also effective communication and conflict resolution skills to prevent escalation (Abeyratne, 2019). Effective cross-cultural interaction requires not only communication proficiency but also interpersonal sensitivity and adaptability, which are critical for both service quality and flight safety (Yasmin, 2023).

Knowledge of Rules and Regulatory Compliance

Cabin crew must possess comprehensive knowledge of aviation regulations, safety procedures, and legal requirements governing passenger interactions. Compliance with these regulations is essential to ensure safety and avoid legal repercussions for airlines (Dismukes et al., 2017). Cabin crew must exercise their authority within established legal and ethical boundaries while ensuring passenger safety and compliance with aviation regulations (Abeyratne, 2019).

Training programs are designed to familiarize crew members with these rules; however, applying them in real-time situations can be challenging, particularly when dealing with unpredictable passenger behavior. The ability to balance regulatory compliance with customer service expectations is a critical aspect of cabin crew performance (Suthatorn & Charoensukmongkol, 2018).

Leadership Support and Organizational Context

Supportive leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing cabin crew performance and well-being. Organizational support, including fair policies, recognition, and effective communication, can mitigate the negative effects of job-related stress and improve employee motivation (Asata et al., 2020; Ginnett, 2017; Schlichting, 2023).

Leaders are responsible for designing training programs, establishing work policies, and fostering a supportive work environment. Their role is particularly important in addressing challenges such as fatigue, stress, and job dissatisfaction. Effective leadership contributes to improved morale, better teamwork, and enhanced service delivery (Asata et al., 2020; Haji Amiri et al., 2025).

Impact on Job Performance and Satisfaction

The demanding nature of cabin crew work significantly influences job satisfaction and performance outcomes. Research indicates that factors such as workload, stress, and inadequate support lead to burnout, which negatively affects service quality and safety (Fredes-Collarte et al., 2024).

Low job satisfaction has been associated with reduced organizational commitment, decreased motivation, and impaired performance (Kim & Park, 2025). These findings highlight that employee well-being is not only a human resource concern but also a critical determinant of operational effectiveness and airline reputation.

Training Evaluation Models and Conceptual Foundation

Training evaluation has traditionally been guided by established frameworks such as Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Model, which assesses reaction, learning, behavior, and results (Kirkpatrick, 1959). Phillips extended this model by incorporating Return on Investment (ROI) to evaluate the financial impact of training (Phillips, 2012). Holton's HRD Evaluation Model further advanced the field by integrating factors such as motivation, ability, and environmental influences (Holton, 1996).

While these models provide valuable insights, they primarily focus on measurable outcomes and often overlook psychological constructs such as confidence, which play a crucial role in translating training into performance. Moreover, the moderating effects of leadership and organizational support are not sufficiently emphasized.

Research Gap and Theoretical Contribution

The review indicates that although extensive research exists on cabin crew training, performance, and job satisfaction, a critical gap remains. Specifically, prior studies and training evaluation models do not adequately address the paradox wherein frequent and structured training fails to translate into confidence and operational readiness.

Furthermore, limited attention has been given to the role of confidence as a mediating variable and the influence of organizational factors such as leadership support, motivation, and well-being as moderating variables. This gap highlights the need for a more integrated framework that captures both psychological and organizational dimensions of training effectiveness.

To address this limitation, the present study proposes the ***Confidence Training Alignment Framework (CTAF)***, with the ***Confidence Training Alignment Model (CTAM)*** as its empirical operationalization. This framework positions confidence as the central mechanism linking training inputs to performance outcomes while incorporating key moderating factors, thereby bridging the gap between training design and operational realities.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design to provide a comprehensive understanding of cabin crew training effectiveness and its alignment with operational realities. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the study captures measurable patterns as well as in-depth insights into the experiences and perceptions of cabin crew and management personnel. The quantitative component is based on survey data collected from 55 cabin crew members working in the Omani/GCC aviation sector, while the qualitative component includes semi-structured interviews conducted with managers, supervisors, and senior cabin crew to gain a broader organizational perspective.

The survey instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire designed to assess confidence levels across key competency areas, including language proficiency, customer psychology, teamwork, emergency response, and workload management. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, and demographic information such as age, educational qualifications, and work experience was also collected to support contextual analysis. A Likert scale allows researchers to translate the derived averages into verbal categories for clear interpretation (Joshi et al., 2015). In parallel, the qualitative interviews explored themes related to training adequacy, preparedness for real-world challenges, and the role of organizational policies and support systems in shaping performance outcomes.

Data analysis was conducted using a combination of descriptive statistical techniques and thematic analysis. Quantitative data were summarized to identify trends and patterns in training effectiveness and confidence levels, while qualitative responses were systematically coded to extract recurring themes and insights. The

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integration of both data strands through triangulation enhanced the validity and robustness of the findings. Based on the combined evidence, the study develops the Confidence Training Alignment Framework and its empirical extension, the Confidence Training Alignment Model (CTAM), which conceptualizes confidence as a mediating factor between training inputs and operational outcomes, influenced by leadership support and organizational context.

Findings

Table 1. Respondents Demography

Category	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	36	65.45
	Female	19	34.55
Age	20-25	6	10.91
	26 to 30 years	28	50.91
	31-35	10	18.18
	Above 36	11	20.00
Qualification	Bachelors	27	49.09
	Diploma	12	21.82
	High school	9	16.36
	Masters	3	5.45
	Ph.D.	4	7.27
Experience	Less than 5 years	22	40.00
	6 to 10 years	25	45.45
	Above 16 years	4	7.27
	Less than 15 years	4	7.27

Table 2. Confidence Level of the crews in various duty stations

	VH	H	N	L	VL	WAM	p-value	Rank
Good attitude	40	11	4	0	0	0.310	< .001	1
Helping a customer with special requirements	29	21	5	0	0	0.296		2
Awareness and tolerance of all cultures	29	19	7	0	0	0.293		3
Leadership	29	17	9	0	0	0.291		4
Communication skills	28	19	7	1	0	0.290		5
Empathy	27	15	13	0	0	0.284		6
Problem solving	24	21	9	1	0	0.282		7
Time management	23	22	10	0	0	0.282		8
Helping them seating	24	20	10	1	0	0.281		9
Knowledge of Airlines and aviation rules	23	23	7	2	0	0.281		10
Checking in customers	22	22	11	0	0	0.280		11
Skills and knowledge	17	29	8	1	0	0.275		12
Overall Work Demand	14	29	12	0	0	0.269		13
Multiple language	15	24	15	1	0	0.264		14
Knowledge of first aid	20	15	17	3	0	0.263		15
Physical fitness	16	23	13	3	0	0.263		16
Health emergency	16	25	9	4	1	0.262		17

(VH - Very High; H – high; N – neutral; L – low, VL -very low)

The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between the confidence level of the crews and the choices of the respondents. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship. Based on the Weighted Average Mean (WAM) values, *'Good Attitude'* ranked first (.310). This was followed by *'Helping a customer with special requirements'* (.296) & '*Awareness*

and tolerance of all cultures' (.293) – second and third ranks. Meanwhile, *'Leadership'* (.291), *'Communication skills'* (.290), and *'Empathy' (.284)* ranked fourth, fifth & sixth respectively.

Table 3. Last Training Attended

	<3m	4-6m	6-12m	13-24m
Airline rules and regulations	6	6	23	20
Customer behaviour	4	5	24	22
Customer psychology	4	6	22	23
Grooming	4	4	24	23
Health emergency	4	10	26	15
Handling customers from different backgrounds and mentalities	3	8	22	22
Handling job stress	2	9	23	21
Landing emergency	6	10	28	11
Language proficiency	3	5	22	25
Security and a terror attack	8	8	25	14
Time management	1	6	27	21
Team work	6	8	21	20

Table 3 indicates that the majority of training programs across key competency areas were last attended within the 6–24-month period, suggesting a moderate frequency of training refresh cycles. Notably, training related to critical operational areas such as landing emergencies and health emergencies appears to have been conducted relatively more recently compared to other modules. In contrast, soft skill–oriented training areas, including language proficiency, customer psychology, and handling diverse passenger backgrounds, show a comparatively longer gap since last attendance.

This distribution highlights a greater emphasis on safety and emergency preparedness within recent training initiatives, while potentially indicating insufficient prioritization or updating of soft skills training. Such an imbalance may have implications for cabin crew readiness in managing interpersonal and cross-cultural challenges during real-world operations.

Table 4. Impact of In-Flight Incidents on Cabin Crew Performance

	SA	A	N	D	SD	WAM	p-value	Rank
Angry customers can be rude and unruly towards cabin crew	19	15	12	5	4	0.248		1
There is a rise in the number of cases of flight delays due to weather/ technical issues	19	12	15	5	4	0.245		2
Customers can be impatient and disregard flight rules and regulations	16	10	21	2	6	0.234		3
There is a rise in the number of incidents where cabin crew have been threatened by angry customers	7	15	17	9	7	0.207	< .001	4
There is a rise in the number of incidents of unruly customer behaviour while on a flight	9	10	20	9	7	0.206		5
There is a rise in the number of technical errors while on a flight	6	12	20	12	5	0.202		6
There is a rise in the cases of customer health emergencies while on a flight	6	10	26	5	8	0.201		7

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There is a rise in the number of cases of emergency landings or flight diversions	6	9	16	16	8	0.187		8
There is a rise in the number of suspicions of a terrorist attack on a flight	3	3	13	11	25	0.137		9

(SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, N - Neutral, D – Disagree, DA - Strongly Disagree)

The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between the Impact of In-Flight Incidents on Cabin Crew Performance and the choices of the respondents. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship. Based on the Weighted Average Mean (WAM) values, *'Angry customers can be rude and unruly towards cabin crew'* ranked first (.248). This was followed by *'There is a rise in the number of cases of flight delays due to weather/technical issues'* (.245) & '*Customers can be impatient and disregard flight rules and regulations*' (.234) – second and third ranks. Meanwhile, *'There is a rise in the number of incidents where cabin crew have been threatened by angry customers'* (.207), *'There is a rise in the number of incidents of unruly customer behaviour while on a flight'* (.206), and *'There is a rise in the number of technical errors while on a flight'* (.202) ranked fourth, fifth & sixth respectively.

Table 5. Impact of Cross-Cultural In-Flight Incidents on Cabin Crew Performance

	SA	A	N	D	SD	WAM	p-value	Rank
Handling passengers from diverse cultural backgrounds affects my performance during flights	10	25	14	3	3	0.244		1
It is challenging for cabin crew members to manage and respond to diverse cultural groups during a flight	3	21	17	10	4	0.211	< .001	2
Difficulty in understanding and relating to different cultures affects my performance during flights	6	17	16	11	5	0.210		3

(SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, N - Neutral, D – Disagree, DA - Strongly Disagree)

The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between the Impact of Cross-Cultural In-Flight Incidents on Cabin Crew Performance and the choices of the respondents. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship. Based on the Weighted Average Mean (WAM) values, *'Handling passengers from diverse cultural backgrounds affects my performance during flights'* ranked highest (.244). This was followed by *'It is challenging for cabin crew members to manage and respond to diverse cultural groups during a flight'* (.211) & *'Difficulty in understanding and relating to different cultures affects my performance during flights*' (.210) – second and third ranks.

Table 6. Impact of In-Flight Emergency and Threat Situations on Cabin Crew Performance

	SA	A	N	D	SD	WAM	p-value	Rank
Dealing with angry customers affects my performance during flights	10	20	15	8	2	0.234		1
Managing emergency landings or flight diversions affects my performance during flights	9	17	18	9	2	0.227	< .001	2
Handling flight delays due to weather or technical issues affects my performance during flights	11	17	15	6	6	0.225		3

Managing unruly passenger behaviour during flights affects my performance	6	21	14	11	3	0.219		4
Handling threats from aggressive passengers affects my performance during flights	7	18	17	8	5	0.217		5
Managing passengers who are impatient and disregard flight rules affects my performance during flights	5	20	17	9	4	0.216		6
Dealing with technical issues during flights affects my performance	6	15	20	12	2	0.213		7
Handling security-related threats involving passengers affects my performance during flights	6	16	21	7	5	0.213		8
Managing passenger medical emergencies affects my performance during flights	7	9	21	12	6	0.199		9
Responding to suspected terrorist threats during flights affects my performance	5	10	16	13	11	0.182		10

(SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, N - Neutral, D – Disagree, DA - Strongly Disagree)

The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between the Impact of In-Flight Emergency and Threat Situations on Cabin Crew Performance and the choices of the respondents. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship. Based on the Weighted Average Mean (WAM) values, *'Dealing with angry customers affects my performance during flights'* ranked first (.234). This was followed by *'Managing emergency landings or flight diversions affects my performance during flights'* (.227) & 'Handling flight delays due to weather or technical issues affects my performance during flights' (.225) – second and third ranks. Meanwhile, *'Managing unruly passenger behaviour during flights affects my performance'* (.219), *'Handling threats from aggressive passengers affects my performance during flights'* (.217), and *'Managing passengers who are impatient and disregard flight rules affects my performance during flights'* (.216) ranked fourth, fifth & sixth respectively.

Table 7. Perceived Leadership Support

	SA	A	N	D	SD	WAM	p-value	Rank
Leadership support is essential for effectively resolving in-flight issues and maintaining customer service quality	20	14	10	9	2	0.250		1
Leadership support enables me to share problems and concerns that affect my performance and job satisfaction	17	17	11	8	2	0.247	< .001	2
Leadership support facilitates open communication regarding training needs and development requirements	17	19	7	10	2	0.247		3
Leadership support enhances team performance	12	15	13	11	4	0.224		4

(SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, N - Neutral, D – Disagree, DA - Strongly Disagree)

The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between Perceived Leadership Support and the choices of the respondents. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship. Based on the Weighted Average Mean (WAM) values, *'Leadership support is essential for effectively resolving in-flight issues and maintaining customer service quality'* ranked

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highest (.250). This was followed by both *'Leadership support enables me to share problems and concerns that affect my performance and job satisfaction'* (.247) & '*Leadership support facilitates open communication regarding training needs and development requirements*' (.247) – second rank, and '*Leadership support enhances team performance*' (.224) ranked third.

Table 8. Interviewee Details

Cadre	Years of Experience				Gender		
	< 10 yrs	10 – 25 yrs	> 25 yrs	Total	Male	Female	Total
Senior Management			1	1	1		1
Cabin Crew Head			1	1	1		1
Senior Cabin Crew	2	1		3		3	3
Senior First Officers	1			1	1		1
Others	1	1		2	1	1	2
Total	4	2	2	8	4	4	8

Table 9. Interview with Managers

Question	Responses
1. According to your observation/experience, do you feel the cabin crews are well-trained to handle their job effectively?	Most interviewees indicated that cabin crew are generally well prepared for routine operational duties. They emphasized that existing training programs provide strong preparation in medical, safety, and security scenarios, with safety consistently treated as the highest priority. However, one respondent noted that certain gaps in preparedness become evident in unusual or unpredictable situations. In this regard, participants suggested enhancing training by incorporating greater emphasis on cultural awareness and advanced safety procedures. Additionally, one interviewee highlighted that current training frameworks align with established standards set by aviation authorities such as CAA, IATA, and ICAO, thereby ensuring a baseline level of preparedness among cabin crew.
2. Which areas of training do you think are required to enhance the cabin crew performance, and what would be your suggested training frequency for the same?	Most respondents reported that cabin crew training programs are systematically structured in line with industry standards to sustain and improve performance levels. At the same time, several interviewees highlighted the need to enhance training content by incorporating cultural awareness components, which would enable crew members to better understand passenger values, communication styles, and behavioral expectations, thereby improving interaction quality. It was further noted that key areas such as safety procedures and in-flight medical emergencies are typically covered through annual training. In addition, recurrent programs include swimming drills, soft skills development, product knowledge, passenger handling techniques, and training on fatigue management and resilience. For supervisory personnel, conflict management training is conducted on a semi-annual basis. Although there was broad agreement that safety and emergency preparedness remain central to training priorities, one respondent emphasized the importance of increasing the frequency and adopting more scenario-based approaches in these areas. Such enhancements, it was suggested, would strengthen the practical preparedness and confidence of cabin crew in managing real-world operational challenges.
3. What policy/management support changes would	All respondents agreed that motivation plays a critical role in enhancing service quality, with self-motivation identified as a key driver of performance. Interviewees emphasized the importance of strong

you recommend to motivate the cabin crew, improve their performance, and enhance their job satisfaction?	managerial support, supported by effective leadership practices, open communication, teamwork, and crew resource management. In addition, several organizational factors were highlighted as essential for sustaining motivation, including fair sick leave policies, improved rest provisions, mental health support, equitable rostering practices, and adequate uniform allowances. Broader recommendations focused on strengthening organizational policies and support systems. These included the need for clear guidelines to manage unruly passengers, supported by a zero-tolerance approach to disruptive behavior. Respondents also emphasized the importance of enhanced security measures, fatigue risk management, career development opportunities, and greater integration of crew feedback and grievance mechanisms into organizational decision-making processes.

Discussion

To integrate the quantitative and qualitative findings, the CTAM Matrix (Table 10) was developed. It synthesizes training inputs, confidence levels, and performance-related factors, highlighting key alignment gaps and paradoxes.

Table 10. CTAM Matrix: Thematic Representation of Survey Findings

CTAM Input	**Data Input**			**Synthesised Findings**
	Cabin Crew Confidence Level (Table 2)	**Training Inputs/Timeline** (Table 3)	**Factors they felt impacted Performance (Tables 4–7)**	**Crew survey implications & Management Insight (Table 9)**
Leadership Support	Leadership skill - high confidence (**.291**, communication skill high confidence (**.290)**	Teamwork & Time management, Infrequent & Outdated training /Outdated (36–38% >1 yr)	Leadership support in opening channels of communication for crew to share their challenges, support in finding solutions, including finding suitable training, scored high agreement (**.247 to .250**)	1. Leadership bridges training & communication gaps. 2. Emphasized cultural awareness, open communication, guidelines for unruly passengers, and morale support.
Motivation & Well-Being	Crew marked themselves high in confidence, meeting their Work demand (**.269)**	Handling job stress, long gap in between training /Outdated (40% >1 yr)	Top factors impacting crew performance: Angry customers (**.248)**, Flight delays (**.245)**, Health emergencies (**.201)**	1. Daily stressors undermine wellbeing; training is misaligned with realities. 2. Highlighted fatigue risk management, resilience training, mental health programs, and fair rostering.
Operational Relevance	Crew confidence in their language skills was high (**.264–.293)**	Language proficiency: Long gap in between training /Outdated (45% >1 yr)	High impact on performance due to Cross-cultural stress (**.244**)	1. Long gap in between training /Outdated training linked to lower confidence. 2. Called for cultural awareness and customer service training annually, confirming survey findings.

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Training Design	The areas crew were confident of their professional behaviour as high Empathy **(.284)** and Attitude **(.310)**	Soft skills, long gap in between training /Outdated (>1 yr: psychology, grooming, customer behaviour)	Angry customers top stressor **(.248)**	1. Confidence sustained via experience while on duty, not training. 2. Stressed soft skills, conflict management, and customer service training design improvements.
Training Frequency	Health emergency confidence is high **(0.262)**	Health emergency training is mostly 6–12 months	Low confidence in health emergencies **(.201)**	1. Frequency does not automatically mean more confidence; Maybe because the training was too theoretical. 2. Confirmed annual/6–12-month refreshers, but emphasized scenario-based emergency training to build confidence.

The CTAM Matrix highlights a critical paradox: while training is conducted regularly, confidence levels do not consistently reflect this frequency. In contrast, soft skill competencies show relatively higher confidence despite limited formal training, suggesting reliance on experiential learning. The findings further indicate that routine operational challenges exert a greater influence on performance than rare emergencies, emphasizing the need for more contextually aligned training approaches.

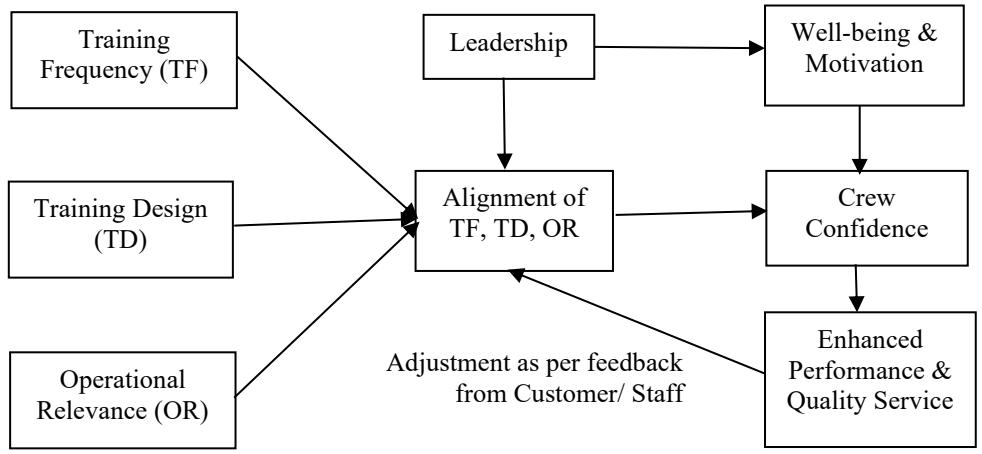

Figure 1. Conference Training Alignment Framework (CTAF) Model

Based on these insights, the conceptual pathway is illustrated in Figure 1, presenting the CTAF model, which links training alignment and leadership support to cabin crew confidence and performance outcomes.

Conclusion

This study identifies a critical gap between the frequency of cabin crew training and the development of operational confidence. Although training programs are regularly conducted and aligned with industry standards, they do not consistently translate into preparedness for real-world challenges. The findings indicate that confidence is shaped not by training frequency alone, but by the extent to which training content reflects practical operational demands, particularly in areas such as cross-cultural interaction, passenger management, and fatigue resilience.

The proposed Confidence Training Alignment Framework (CTAF) and its operational model (CTAM) offer a comprehensive perspective on this relationship. By positioning confidence as a mediating variable and incorporating leadership and organizational support as moderating factors, the model explains how training inputs are translated into performance outcomes. The CTAM Matrix further substantiates this by highlighting key paradoxes, including the coexistence of frequent training with uneven confidence levels and the reliance on experiential learning in soft skill domains.

The study also emphasizes the importance of organizational context. Leadership support, open communication, fair policies, and well-being initiatives play a significant role in shaping motivation, confidence, and performance. Overall, the research contributes both theoretically and practically by providing a structured approach to aligning training with operational realities, thereby enhancing cabin crew effectiveness, service quality, and safety outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the proposed CTAF framework, the following recommendations are suggested:

Based on the findings and the CTAF framework, several strategic recommendations are proposed to improve Airlines' soft skills training—particularly in language proficiency, customer psychology, and teamwork—by incorporating scenario-based and experiential learning methods that reflect real in-flight situations. Emergency preparedness training should also be strengthened through simulation-based and case-driven approaches, especially for medical and high-risk scenarios, to enhance practical confidence.

Training programs must be better aligned with the day-to-day realities faced by cabin crew, with greater emphasis on managing difficult passengers, handling delays, and navigating cross-cultural interactions. In this context, structured training in cultural competence and diversity awareness is essential.

The adoption of digital technologies, such as virtual reality simulations, fatigue monitoring systems, and e-learning platforms, can further enhance training effectiveness and flexibility. At the organizational level, greater involvement of cabin crew in policy development and review processes is recommended to ensure that operational challenges are adequately addressed. Establishing structured feedback mechanisms that link crew experiences and passenger insights to training design will also improve relevance and responsiveness.

Strengthening leadership practices is equally important. Promoting open communication, formalizing feedback systems, and implementing effective fatigue risk management strategies can significantly enhance confidence and performance. In addition, well-being initiatives—such as fair rostering, adequate rest provisions, recognition programs, and mental health support—should be prioritized to reduce burnout and sustain motivation.

Finally, organizations are encouraged to adopt the Confidence Training Alignment Model (CTAM) as an ongoing evaluation tool to assess whether training inputs effectively translate into confidence and performance outcomes, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment.

The findings reaffirm that training effectiveness depends on alignment rather than frequency. Confidence emerges when training is operationally relevant and supported by a conducive organizational environment. CTAF provides the conceptual foundation, CTAM operationalizes this relationship, and the CTAM Matrix offers an empirical representation of key gaps and paradoxes. Together, they present a coherent framework for enhancing cabin crew training, performance, and overall service quality.

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